



NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF
ADAM J. BELLO
MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

For Immediate Release
Tuesday, August 22, 2023

COUNTY EXECUTIVE BELLO AND SHERIFF BAXTER ASK LEGISLATURE TO TIGHTEN LAWS COVERING PAWN SHOPS

Changes are aimed at reducing surge in retail thefts driven by opioid addiction

ROCHESTER, NY — Monroe County Executive Adam Bello and Sheriff Todd Baxter have asked the County Legislature to enact changes to the County Law regarding the regulation of pawnbrokers, secondhand dealers, and jewelry and coin exchange dealers. The changes will help law enforcement to interrupt the ongoing cycle of retail theft and its role in fueling the opioid crisis. The new law will require greater accountability and expand the Sheriff's authority to suspend or revoke the license of any non-compliant businesses.

"We are taking a number of steps to address the opioid crisis, but we can't ignore the fact that it's spurring criminal activity," **said County Executive Bello**. "When people steal goods from retailers and pawn them to support their opioid addiction, everyone suffers."

This type of theft is costing local retailers hundreds of thousands of dollars and that ultimately has an impact on consumer prices. It also requires a significant dedication of law enforcement resources.

"Our community is hurting," **said Monroe County Undersheriff Korey Brown**. "For far too long, pawn shops have been an easy outlet for people struggling with drug addiction, fueling their habit by turning stolen goods into quick cash to feed their addiction."

The proposed changes, which requires approval by the County Legislature, will limit the number of new items an individual can sell to these shops during a calendar year. Specifically, the law would make it illegal for any individual to sell more than three new goods that are identical or a similar type within a calendar year. Dealers who accept items from individuals who exceed that limit will be subject to penalties ranging from fines to suspension of their license.

The proposed changes also strengthen record keeping requirements for dealers and allows law enforcement to impose conditions on dealers whose licenses have been suspended.

"The rise in crime in our community is unacceptable and as County Legislators, we must do all we can to bring it to an end – strengthening Local Laws to curb retail theft will help do just that. I am thankful to the Republican Legislators of the past for having the

foresight to implement this legislation nearly ten years ago, but it is now time for a much needed update,” **said Legislature Vice-President Sean M. Delehanty.** “Bringing these regulations into the 21st century will require tagged items to assist law enforcement, bring internet commerce under its purview, and further hold both criminal sellers and dealers accountable. I am proud to support this legislation to bolster accountability and public safety.”

Local law makes the Monroe County Sheriff the licensing officer for pawnbrokers, secondhand dealers, and jewelry and coin exchange dealers throughout the County, except in municipalities that have their own laws. These changes will help better align the County’s laws with those already in place in the City of Rochester and the Town of Irondequoit. The Town of Greece also has its own laws governing these businesses in their jurisdiction.

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Media inquiries:

Gary Walker, Director of Communications
GaryWalker@MonroeCounty.gov
(585) 753-1064

**Meaghan M. McDermott, Deputy Director
of Communications**
MeaghanMcDermott@MonroeCounty.gov
(585) 469-4365